

REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1 and 24 have been amended. Claims 1-4, 6, 8-15, 17 and 19-24 are pending and under consideration.

The sole issue remaining in this application is a rejection of all claims as under 35 USC § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,926,816 to Bauer et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,806,074 to Souder et al.

Bauer et al. has previously been discussed. Both Bauer et al. and Souder et al. relate to a relational database model. This is immediately apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art. In a relational database model, data is deposited in fields of tables. These data tables are on a client and a server. In the context of Bauer et al. and Souder et al., a conflict relates only to a data object. Dependencies between conflicts or inconsistencies are not considered.

A relational database model is unable to determine dependencies between inconsistencies and alter a decision set based on the dependencies. On the other hand, the specification describes that the invention may employ an object-oriented data model. See page 2, lines 1-3 of the application. In an object-oriented data model, complex dependencies can be taken into account between the individual objects in the database. For example, it is possible to insert a complete tree structure of objects into the database. Based on the dependencies between the individual objects (for example, hierarchical dependencies in the tree structure), dependencies also result between possible conflicts and inconsistencies. Thus, problems other than those dealt with in the prior art can be addressed using an object-oriented database.

Independent claim 1, for example, recites ascertaining a plurality of inconsistencies and the dependencies on one another before eliminating the inconsistency. Thus, in the context of the invention, conflict types are defined with more complexity than in Bauer et al. and Souder et al. Because the references employ a relational database model, they clearly do not modify, while eliminating inconsistency, a decision set for at least one conflict type based on dependencies of inconsistencies such that a future conflict is eliminated by a modified method.

Although independent claims 1, 12 and 23 do not specifically recite an object-oriented database, dependent claim 9 and amended independent claim 24 do recite an object-oriented database. The Examiner addresses the object-oriented features of claim 9 by citing column 27, lines 50-65 of Bauer et al. However, this portion of the reference refers to tables, columns and fields. Therefore, it is clear that Bauer et al. treats the object-oriented database therein as a relational database. The system of Bauer et al. is unable to address the problems which occur

with an object-oriented database.

Specifically with regard to Souder et al., this reference also relates to a relational database model in which data is deposited in fields of tables. In Souder et al., dependencies between conflicts or inconsistencies are not considered.

The Examiner asserts that Souder et al. discloses "modifying, while eliminating the inconsistency, said decision set for at least one conflict type based on dependencies of said inconsistencies such that a future conflict is eliminated by modified method." Applicant respectfully disagrees. The portion of Souder et al. cited by the Examiner describes that a user can supply a conflict resolution routine. Column 11, lines 38-44 of Souder et al. state:

The present invention provides various declarative conflict resolution methods for each type of conflict. The user can choose and declare one or more conflict resolution methods to be used for each possible conflict. The user can also declare the priority order of applying the resolution methods when there is more than one resolution method for a possible conflict.

Column 11, lines 56-58 state "[t]he user can write their own conflict resolution routines and use them together with the standard conflict resolution routines." Column 12, lines 53-56 of Souder et al. state "[a]lthough the present invention is not provided in any standard conflict resolution routine for a delete conflict, the delete conflict can still be detected, and resolved with a user defined conflict resolution routine."

From the above, it should be clear that Souder et al. allows, and perhaps requires, a user to provide a conflict resolution routine. However, Souder et al. involves a relational database model. Accordingly, it is improper to assume that there are dependencies of inconsistencies on one another. Certainly, Souder et al. makes no mention of such dependencies. Further, the claims recite modifying, while eliminating the inconsistency, said decision set for at least one conflict type. In Souder et al., it appears that the conflict resolution routines are written for future use, before the system is operating. In addition, Souder et al. relates to a user controlled system. On the other hand, independent claim 1 has been amended to recite automatically modifying the decision set. Independent claim 12 relates to a processor configured to modify a decision set. Independent claim 23 recites processors modify, during elimination of said consistency, a decision set. The claims do not relate to a manual procedure.

Finally, Applicant questions whether it is proper to combine Souder et al. with Bauer et al. The Souder et al. user-defined conflict resolution routine is for delete conflicts. Souder et al.

describes that a user-defined conflict resolution routine is necessary because no standard conflict resolution routine is provided. On the other hand, Bauer et al. describes, in significant detail, how delete conflicts are treated. See Table 1 and column 22, line 29 through column 23, line 55. There is no need for the Souder et al. method in Bauer et al.

Because neither Bauer et al. nor Souder et al., taken alone or in any proper combination, disclose or suggest "modifying, while eliminating the inconsistency, said decision set for at least one conflict type based on dependencies of inconsistencies such that a future conflict is eliminated by a modified method," the claims patentably distinguish over the references.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on September 28, 2004
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